THE PRINCIPALL GROVNDS OF CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

Briefely and plainly propounded by way of Queſtion and Anſwere for the inſtructing of the younger ſort.

By that late and Worthy Diuine Mr. *N. Byfeild*,

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BIBLIOTHECA·BODLEIANA·

Christian Reader.

I Shall not neede to vſe many words either of commendation of this ſmall Treatiſe, ſeeing the bare name of him that was the cheiſe Author therof, I ſuppoſe may be enough to obtaine ſufficient eſteeme for it, with thoſe that haue knowne him, either by his learned writings, or powerfull Miniſtery. Nor of Apologie for my ſelfe in aduenturing to caſt this little mite into the Lords Treaſury from him that hath beene able to giue ſuch abundance in greater Volumes, ſeeing it pleaſed

him to commit vnto my care both this and other of his labours, earnestly desiring that if there were any thing found among his writings, that might bee thought profitable for the publike good, I should vse my best endeauour to haue it published; I haue therefore thought it my duty to the liuing if not to the dead, that the end aymed at by him might not be frustrated: Some of his workes haue beene published since his death, and more haue beene long since ready for the Presse; which I hope shall ere long come forth. I know it was the Authors purpose to haue made a more compleate and exact Catechisme if the Lord had prolonged his life; but he hauing finished his allotted taske, God tooke him home to rest from all his labours; howeuer it was his desire in the meane time to publish these short grounds, for the benefit of the younger sort, which are very briefely propounded for the helpe of memory, and

most

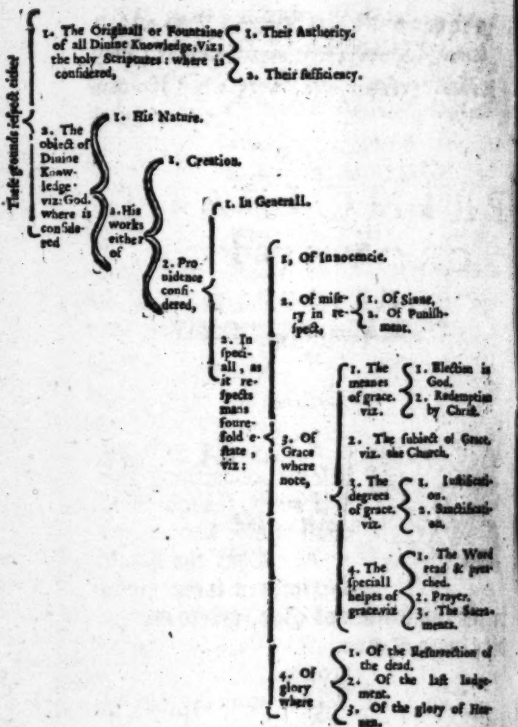
moſt eaſie and plaine for vnderſtanding of the moſt ſimple; and yet if wee marke them, wee may perceiue very much matter comprehended in a few words. It comes vnto thine hands entire for the moſt part as it was left by him, very little being added or altered; the whole frame I haue caſt into a ſhort Table at the beginning, to the end the learner may firſt ſee and learne the whole methode and ſubſtance in a few words; as alſo I haue ſet downe the ſubſtance (at leaſt) of thoſe ſpeciall proofes that confirme theſe Principles; to the end thou mayeſt ſaue thy labour for ſearching the places of Scripture quoted, as alſo that ſuch as learne the Anſweres, they may by degrees learne alſo, and know the words of the chiefe proofes; for by this meanes they may profit more ſoundly, when their faith ſhall bee grounded not vpon the weake foundation of humane Authoritie; but vp-

on the most perfect and sure words of God; learne them therefore diligently, and the Lord give thee vnderstanding in all things.

Farewell,

thine in the Lord,

W. C.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THE

THE PRINCIPALL GROVNDS OF CHRISTIAN Religion.

Question.

WHAT ought you to beleeue concerning the Scriptures, the fountaine of all Diuine knowledge.

A. That the whole Scriptures were giuen by the inspiration of God, and so are the very word of God. The authoritie of the Scripture.

Proofes.

2. Tim. 3. 16. All *Scripture* is giuen by inspiration of God, &c.

2. Pet. 1. 21. For the Prophecie came not in olde time, by the will of man, but holy

holy Men of God, spake as they were moued by the holy Ghost.

Q. What else?

The sufficiencie of the Scriptures.

A. That they are perfect euery way sufficient of themselues, to direct vs in all things needfull to holinesse or saluation.

Proofes.

Psal. 19. 7. The Law of the Lord is perfect, &c.

2. Tim. 3. 16. 17. And is profitable for doctrine, for reproofe, &c.

That the man of God may bee perfect, &c.

Q. What ought you to beleeue concerning God, the cheife obiect of diuine knowledge?

A. That there is but one God.

Proofes.

1. Cor. 8. 4. Wee know that an Idoll is nothing in the World, and that there is none other God but one.

Ephes. 4. 6. One God and Father of all, &c.

Q. What else doe ye beleeue of God?

Gods nature.

A. That he is of a most glorious nature, being an Eternall spirit, infinite in Essence, Knowledge, Goodnesse, and Power.

Proofes.

Proofes.

Esay 6. 3. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hostes, the whole Earth is full of his glory.

Exod. 34. 6, 7. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord, God, mercifull and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodnesse and power, &c.

Iob 42. 2. I know that thou canst doe euery thing, and that no thought can bee withholden from thee.

Iohn 4. 24. God is a spirit, &c.

1. Tim. 1. 17. Now vnto the King eternall, immortall, inuisible, the onely wise God, &c.

Q. What else doe ye beleeue of God?

A. That the God-head is distinguished into three persons; the Father, Son, and holy Ghost.

Proofes.

Matth. 28. 19. Goe yee therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Sonne, and of the holy Ghost.

1. Iohn 5. 7. There be three that beare record in Heauen, the Father, the Word, and the holy Ghost, &c.

Thus

Thus much of what you are to beleeue, concerning the nature of God.

Q. What ought you to beleeue, concerning the workes of God, and so first of Gods worke of creation?

Gods work of creation.

A. That in the beginning God, by his Word, made all things of nothing very good.

Proofes.

Colos. 1.16. For by him were all things created, that are in Heauen, or in Earth, &c.

Hebr. 11. 3. Through faith wee vnderstand, that the Worlds were framed by the word of God.

Gene. 1. 31. And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good.

Q. What ought you to beleeue, concerning the worke of Gods prouidence in generall.

The worke of Gods prouidence in generall.

A. That God vpholds, and gouernes all things by his power, according to his owne pleasure.

Proofes.

Psalm. 119. verse 91. They continue this day according to thine ordinances, &c.

Rom.

Rom. 11.36. For of him, and through him, and to him are all things, &c.

Psalm. 115.3. But our God is in the Heauens, hee hath done whatsoeuer hee pleased.

Acts 17.25. He giueth vnto all life and breath.

Q. How must you consider of the worke of Gods prouidence, in speciall towards man?

A. According to his fourefold estate, viz. of Innocencie, of Misery, of Grace, and of Glory. Gods speciall prouidence towards man.

Q. What ought you to beleeue, concerning mans estate in his innocencie?

A. That God created man in the likenesse of himselfe, in Knowledge, Holynesse, and Righteousnesse. Mans estate of Innocencie.

Proofes.

Ecclesiast. 7.29. Loe this onely haue I found, that God hath made man vpright.

Ephes. 4.24. And that yee put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousnesse, and true holinesse.

Genesis 1.26. And God said, let vs make man in our Image after our likenesse, &c.

Q. What

Q. What ought you to beleeue, concerning mans estate of Misery?

Mans estate of misery.

A. That all men by nature, are in a most miserable case, being all depriued of the glory of God.

Proofe.

Rom. 3. 23. For all haue sinned and haue come short of the glory of God.

Q. In what respect are all men now so miserable?

A. In respect of sinne, and the iust punishment thereof.

Rom. 5. 12. Wherefore as by one man sinne entred into the World, and death by sinne, and so death passed vpon all men, &c.

Q. What is sinne?

A. The transgression of Gods Law.

Sinne.

1. Iohn 3. 4. —— For sinne is the transgression of the Law.

Q. In what are all men by nature sinfull?

A. They are all sinfull, in their dispositions, thoughts, affections, words, and deedes.

Proofes.

Psal. 14. 3. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthie, &c.

Psal.

Psal. 51.5. Behold, I was shapen in iniquitie, and in sinne did my mother conceiue me, &c.

Iob 15.15. —— The Heauens are not cleane in his sight.

Verse 16. How much more abhominable, and filthie is man, &c.

Genesis 6.5. And God saw that the wickednesse of man was great, &c.

Psalm. 40.12. Innumerable euils haue compassed me about, &c.

Quest. What is the punishment of sinne?

A. Losse of mans first glory, greiuous plagues in this life, a miserable death, and euerlasting torment in hell. Punishment of sinne.

Proofes.

Rom. 3.23. All haue sinned and come short of the glory of God, &c.

Iob 31.3. Is not destruction to the wicked, and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquitie.

Rom. 6.23. For the wages of sinne is death, &c.

2. Thes. 1.9. Who shall bee punished with euerlasting destruction, &c.

Matth. 25.41. Goe ye cursed into euerlasting fire, &c.

Q. How

Q. How came all this misery vpon mankinde at first?

A. By the wilfull transgression of our first parents, being seduced by the Diuell to eate of the forbidden fruite.

Proofes.

Gen. 2. 17. But of the tree of knowledge of good and euill, &c.

Gen. 3. 13. And the woman said, the Serpent beguiled me and I did eate, &c.

Q. What are you to beleeue concerning the third estate of man, which is the estate of Grace?

The meanes of grace are two. First, Election in God.

A. That God of his free grace, before the foundations of the world hath elected certaine men to eternall Saluation.

Proofes.

Ephes. 1. 4, 5, 6. According as he hath chosen vs, &c.

Matth. 22. 14. Many are called but few are chosen.

Rom. 8. 30. Whom hee predestinated, &c.

Q. What else?

Secondly, Redemption by Christ.

A. That God in the fulnesse of time, sent his onely begotten Sonne Iesus Christ to Redeeme vs from our misery.

Proofes.

Proofes.

Gal.4.4.5. When the fulnesse of time was come, God sent his Sonne, &c.

Q. What ought you to beleeue concerning the person of Christ our Sauiour?

A. That he is God and man in one person.

Proofes.

Esay.9.6. For vnto vs a childe is borne, vnto vs a Sonne is giuen, &c.

Rom.9.5. —— Christ came, who is God ouer all blessed for euer, &c.

1.Tim.1.16. —— God manifest in the flesh, &c.

Luke.1.35. —— That holy thing which shall be borne of thee, shall be called the Sonne of God, &c.

Q. What is the office of Christ in generall?

A. To be the onely Mediatour betwixt God and man.

Proofes.

1.Tim.2.5. For there is one God, and one Mediatour betweene God & man, &c.

Q. What hath hee vndertaken to doo for our Redemption in particular?

A. Fiue things.

Q. Which is the first?

Christs Propheticall Office.

A. To reueale vnto Gods Elect all truetly necessary to their saluation.

Proofes.

Iohn 1.18. — The onely begotten Son which is in the bosome of the Father hee hath declared him.

Iohn 15. 15. — For all things that I haue heard of the Father, I haue made knowen vnto you.

Q. What is the second?

His Priestlike Office.

A. To bring in an everlasting Righteousnesse, by obeying the Law of God for vs.

Proofes.

Rom. 5. 19. — So by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

Dan. 9. 24. — And to make reconciliation for iniquitie, and to bring in everlasting righteousnesse, &c.

Q. What is the third?

A. To make satisfaction to the iustice of God for our sinnes, by the sacrifice of himselfe.

1. Pet. 2. 24. Who his owne selfe bare our sinnes, in his owne body on the tree, &c.

Hebr. 9. 28. So Christ was once offered, to beare the sinnes of many, &c.

And

And chap. 7. 27. — For this hee did once, when he offered vp himselfe.

Q. What is the fourth?

A. To make Intercession for vs, at the right hand of God for euer.

Proofes.

Rom. 8. 34. — Who is euen at the right hand of God, who also maketh Intercession for vs.

Hebr. 7. 25. — Seeing hee euer liueth to make Intercession for them.

Q. What is the fift?

A. To gather, and gouerne all the Christ in all ages, to the end of the World, and to bring them to euerlasting Glory in Heauen. Christs regall Office.

Psal. 2. 6. Yet haue I set my King, vpon my holy hill of Sion.

Colos. 1. 18. And hee is the head of the body the Church, &c.

Psalm. 45. 4. And in thy Maiestie ride prosperously, &c.

And verse 6. Thy Throne O God is for euer and euer, &c.

Esay 49. 7. to the tenth verse.

Q. Who receiue the benefit of this Redemption wrought by Christ?

A. Onely the Church, which is a

The subiect of grace is the Church,

company of men in every age that are Gods Elect, gathered by the power of Christ, & seperated from the World, vnto the sincere profession of true Religion.

Proofes.

Ioh. 17.9. —— I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given mee, &c.

Vers. 14. —— They are not of the world, &c.

1. Pet. 2, 9. But yee are a chosen generation, a royall Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People.

Iohn 5, 25. Verily I say vnto you, the howre is comming, and now is, when the dead, shall heare the voyce of the Sonne of God, &c.

Quest. What are the principall benefits we receive by Christ in this life?

Two degrees of grace.

Ans. Our Iustification, and sanctification.

Proofe.

Romanes 8 vers. 30. Moreouer whom hee predestinated, them hee called, and whom hee called, them also hee iustified, &c.

Quest. What is our Iustification?

1. Iustification.

Ans. It is the imputing of the active, and

and passive obedience of Christ unto us, whereby all our sinnes are forgiuen, and we are made iust before God.

Proofes.

2. Cor. 5. 21. For he hath made him to bee sinne for vs, who knew no sinne, &c.

1. Corin. 1. 30. — Who of God is made vnto vs, Wisedome, Righteousnesse, &c.

Romanes 5. verse 19. — So by the obedience of one shall many bee made righteous.

Ieremiah 23. 6. The Lord our righteousnesse.

Romanes 4. 7. Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiuen, &c.

Quest. To whom is the Righteousnesse of Christ imputed?

Ans. Onely to such as haue a true faith.

Proofes.

Romanes 3. verse 28. Therefore wee conclude that a man is iustified by Faith, &c.

Galathi. 2. verse 16. Knowing that a man is not iustified by the workes of

the Lawe but by the faith of Iesus Christ.

Rom. 1. 17. —— The iust shall liue by faith.

Hebrewes 11. verse. 6. But without faith it is vnpossible to please God, &c.

Romanes 3. 25. Whom God hath set forth to bee a propitiation through faith in his blood, &c.

Q. Who haue a true faith?

Answ. Onely such as relie vpon the mercies of God, and the merits of Christ for their iustification and all happinesse.

Proofes.

Rom. 4. 3. — Abraham beleeued God and it was counted to him for righteousnesse.

Acts 16. 31. — Beleeue one the Lord Iesus Christ, and thou shalt be saued, &c.

Galath. 2. 20. — And the life which I now liue, I liue by the faith of the Sonne of God, &c.

Q. What is our Sanctification?

Answere. It is the worke of the

Spirit

Spirit of Christ, by which we repent us of our sinnes, and leave an holy life. 2. Sanctification.

Proofes.

Tit: 3. 5. —— But according to his owne mercy he saued vs, by the washing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the holy Ghost.

Rom. 6. 4. Therefore we are buried with him by Baptisme into death, &c.

1 Pet. 2. 24. —— That we being dead vnto sin, should liue vnto righteousnesse.

Question. What is the outward and ordinary meanes by which God doeth worke these two graces of Faith and Repentance in vs?

Answ. Hearing of the word of God preached.

Proofes.

Rom. 10. 17. Faith comes by hearing, &c.

Ioh. 5. 25. —— And they that heare shall liue.

1 Cor. 1. 21. —— It pleased God by the foolishnesse of preaching to saue such as beleeue, &c.

Acts 2. 37. Now when they heard this they were pricked in their hearts, &c.

Q. How is this Faith and Repentance confirmed and encreased in vs?

1. Helpe of grace, the Word.

A. By three meanes especially.

Q. Which is the first?

A. A diligent and faithfull reading of the holy Scriptures, and hearing of the same word preached, receiuing it with all meekenesse and hartie obedience.

Proofes.

1. Pet. 2. 2. As new borne babes desire the sincere milke, &c.

Iames 1. 21. ——— And receiue with meekenesse the ingrafted word, &c.

Rom. 6. 17. ——— But yee haue obeyed from the heart that forme of doctrine taught, &c.

Q. Which is the second?

2. Helpe of grace, Prayer.

Answ. Feruent and constant prayer vnto God in the holy Ghost, both publike and priuate according to his will.

Proofes.

Iude 20. Praying in the holy Ghost, &c.

Romanes 8. verse 26. But the Spirit

it

it selfe maketh Intercession for vs, &c.

Matthew 6. verse 9. After this manner therefore Pray yee. *Our Father*, &c.

Q. Which is the third?

Answer. A right using and partaking of both the holy Sacraments, viz. Baptisme, and the Supper of the Lord. 3. Helpe of grace.

Quest. What is a Sacrament?

Answere. It is an outward Signe ordained of God, and is appointed to bee unto the worthy receiuer, as a Seale, either of our entrance into Christian profession as Baptisme, or our continuance therein, as the Lords Supper. Sacrament what it is.

Proofe.

Romanes 4. verse 11. And hee receiued the signe of Circumcision, a Seale of the Righteousnesse of faith, &c.

Q. How else may it be more briefely defined?

Answere. It is a visible pledge of those inuisible benefites of our Saluation

nation which we obtaine by Christ.

Quest. How is our faith and Repentance furthered by the Sacrament of Baptisme?

Answere. By the outward washing with Water is not onely signified, and Sealed the inward washing away of our sinnes, by the blood of Christ and power of his Spirit, but also our covenant made then unto God, to forsake sinne and to leade a new life.

Proofes.

Marke 1. verse 4, 5. *Iohn* did Baptize in the Wildernesse, the Baptisme of Repentance for the remission of sinnes, &c.

Titus 3. 5. ——— By the washing of regeneration and renewing of the holy Ghost.

1. Peter 3. verse 21. The like figure whereunto Baptisme doeth saue vs, &c.

Acties 22. verse 16. ——— Arise and bee baptized, and wash away thy sinnes, &c.

Romanes 6. verse 3. 4. Know ye not, that

that as many as were baptized into Iesus Christ were baptized into his death, &c.

Quest. How is our Faith and Repentance furthered by the Sacrament of the Lords Supper?

A. By the worthy partaking of the outward Elements of Bread and Wine is signified and Sealed, the giving and receiving of Christs Body and Blood by Faith to be our Spirituall nourishment.

Proofe.

1. Corinth. 10. vers. 16. The cup of blessing which we blesse, is it not the Communion of the blood of Christ?

Q. How else?

A. By the oft and worthy partaking thereof, we are not onely provoked to a more serious examination of our Spirituall estate, but also by renewing our covenant made to God, to binde our selves more firmely to his service for time to come.

Proofe.

1. Cor. 11. 26. But let a man examine himselfe, and so let him eate, &c.

Thus

Thus farre of mans third estate, viz. the estate of Grace.

Quest. What must you consider of in the last estate of man, *viz.* the estate of Glory?

Mans estate of glory, hath three degrees.

Ans. Three things, the Resurrection from the dead, the last Judgement, and the Glory of Heauen.

Quest. What must you beleeue concerning the Resurrection?

1. Resurrection from the dead.

Ans. That the bodies of all men that die shall bee raised vp from the dead, by the power of Christ at the last day.

Proofes.

Iohn 5. 28. —— For the houre is coming, in the which all that are in the graues, shall heare his voyce.

Acts 24. 15. —— That there shall be a Resurrection of the dead, both of the iust, and vniust.

Reuel. 20. 12. And I saw the dead, both great and small, &c.

Verse 13. And the Sea gaue vp her dead, &c.

Quest. What must you beleeue, concerning the last Iudgement?

Answere

Answere That the World must appeare before the Tribunall seate of Christ, and euery man shall receiue the things done in his body, according to that hee hath done, whether it be good or bad. 2. The last Iudgement.

Proofes.

2. Corin. 5. ver. 10. For wee must all appeare before the Iudgement seat of Christ, &c.

Actes 10. 42. —— And to testifie that it was hee, that was ordained of God to be Iudge of quicke and dead.

Actes 17. verse 31. Because hee hath appointed a day, in the which hee will Iudge the World in Righteousnesse, &c.

Quest. What must you beleeue, concerning the Glory of Heauen?

Ans. That all the godly shall raigne with Christ in vnspeakeable Glory, and eternall happinesse in Heauen. 3. The glory of heauen.

Proofes.

Rom. 2. 7. To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seeke for glory, &c.

Verse 10. But Glory, Honour, and Peace,

Peace, to every man that worketh good, &c.

Matthew 25. 34. Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, come yee blessed of my Father, &c.

Verse 46. And these shall goe away into everlasting punishment; but the Righteous into life Eternall.

1. Peter 1. 4. To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, &c.

1. Cor. 2. 9. Eye hath not seene, nor eare heard, &c.

FINIS.